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SENATE RESOLUTION 89  
By Harper

A RESOLUTION To recognize and honor the Reverend Edwin C. Sanders II and the members of the Metropolitan Interdenominational Church in Nashville.

WHEREAS, The members of this legislative body are proud to recognize and honor those outstanding and committed members of the clergy and their congregations who strive to live out their mission to serve their Creator and humanity by reaching out to those in dire need of assistance; and

WHEREAS, The Reverend Edwin C. Sanders II and the members of the Metropolitan Interdenominational Church in Nashville are highly representative of such a dedicated community of faith; and

WHEREAS, The Reverend Sanders, moved by the devastation inflicted on the health of millions in the continent of Africa by the AIDS epidemic, attended an international conference on AIDS in Durban, South Africa, last year; on a side trip he met the founder of the Agape Center, Director Zodwa Mquadi, who began his operation to house children orphaned by AIDS as a squatter on a 3.5 acre tract in Waterfall, a town on the outskirts of Durban; and

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WHEREAS, Returning to his congregation, the Reverend Sanders mobilized the members to try to help meet some of the needs of the Agape Center; in so doing, they are taking a step to give some hope to the thousands of children left without parents by the AIDS virus, which is thought to have infected 4.7 million South Africans - about 20 percent of the country's adult population; and

WHEREAS, The Metropolitan Interdenominational Church has been deeply involved in the fight against AIDS; in this latest project, 20 members of the congregation, bearing both tools and money, will journey to South Africa to help save the Agape Center, which must either buy the land it occupies, or move; and

WHEREAS, The Metropolitan Interdenominational Church has raised \$11,000 of the \$24,000 needed to purchase the land, and plans to raise the remainder next month; the check will then be presented to the Agape Center and the mission members will assist in renovating the building when they arrive in June; and

WHEREAS, The Church's mission takes place against a background of international finger-pointing among South African leaders, the world community, and pharmaceutical companies that have been accused of trying to turn a profit on HIV drugs in the face of the AIDS pandemic in Africa; U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called for international assistance for developing countries lacking sufficient resources to mount a campaign against HIV/AIDS, and U.S. Senator Bill Frist has called for the United States to double its \$500,000 contribution to that cause over the next two years; and

WHEREAS, Senator Frist has stated that..."It is projected that in the next decade, 40 million children will be orphaned by AIDS - a number equal to all children in this country living east of the Mississippi"; a 2000 U.N. report said that providing institutional care for AIDS orphans is "Impracticably expensive"; and

WHEREAS, Undeterred by gloomy forecasts about the future of the war against AIDS, the Reverend Sanders and his congregation do not believe that it is necessary to always go

through large bureaucratic structures to have impact; they hope to set an example for other churches and eventually to serve as a contact point between hundreds of South African orphanages and HIV/AIDS centers and U.S. faith communities to channel funds and support; and

WHEREAS, The Reverend Sanders and his church bring to bear several years experience in fighting AIDS, having started a "first response wellness center" in 1993, which currently assists 110 HIV-positive residents, including many that are not congregants; part of the money collected during services is used to supply emergency funding, including rent payment and money for drugs not covered by insurance; and

WHEREAS, The members of Metropolitan Interdenominational Church hope that more churches will get involved in the battle against HIV/AIDS which is currently devastating entire societies; in a recent Wednesday night fellowship meal the Reverend Sanders read from the Book of Revelation, 7:14 where people of every nation encircle God's throne: "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"; and

WHEREAS, The members of this General Assembly wish to express their sincere appreciation of, and support for, the unselfish efforts of the Reverend Sanders and his congregation in their efforts to help combat this dire scourge of humankind; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we recognize the outstanding commitment and dedication of the Reverend Edwin C. Sanders II and the members of the Metropolitan Interdenominational Church of Nashville and honor them for faithfully living out their mission as believers and servants of God and humanity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.

